R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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STUDENT TEACHING AND THE FSM FORCE A CHANGE.

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NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSN., WASHINGTON, D.C.

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THE TRAINING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS HAS FAILED TO KEEP PACE WITH THE CHANGE FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN METHODS OF LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS. TO MAKE COLLEGE PROFESSORS AWARE OF THE QUALIFICATIONS NOW NECESSARY FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND THE NEED TO REDESIGN COLLEGE PROGRAMS, ATTENTION HAS BEEN CALLED TO THE RECENT PROGRESS THE PROFESSION HAS MADE IN DESCRIBING TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS, DEVELOPING PROFICIENCY TESTS, AND ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS. AS A PART OF ANY PLAN TO DEVELOP A MORE REALISTIC PROGRAM, METHODS TEACHERS MUST ACCEPT THE NEW OBJECTIVES AND EMPHASES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING, BECOME PROFICIENT IN THE USE OF THE NEW METHODS AND MATERIALS, AND TRAIN STUDENT TEACHERS TO USE THE MATERIALS EFFECTIVELY. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "THE DFL BULLETIN," VOLUME 6, NUMBER 3, MARCH 1967. (AM)

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CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE **Page**

Student Teaching and the FSM Force a Change 2

Discipuli Iterum Fiamus 4

Strengthening FL Programs Through Regional Centers 7

FLES: In Search of Discipline and Content 9

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Student Teaching and the FSM Force a Change

by Louise Hubbard
District of Columbia Public Schools

The emergency period in the teaching of foreign languages continues. The transition from the traditional approach to modern methods of language teaching seems scarcely to have begun. The problem facing the profession is all the more disturbing because great expectations have failed to materialize. Yesterday's future language teacher who was to become today's competent teacher is instead swelling the ranks of those being retrained at the NDEA Institutes. The beginning teacher in the secondary school — the recent college graduate — is prepared neither to teach language for communication, nor to use it effectively himself. Representative of the general pessimism is Elton Hocking's statement: "Evidently the massive effort to retain teachers is a losing one: the colleges and universities are turning out ill-prepared teachers faster than the Institutes can retrain them."[1] The failure to turn out qualified teachers is attributed directly to the college and university foreign language professor. This is a serious indictment of the foreign language departments of institutions having a teacher-preparation program. We can expect, however, that conditions will soon improve. The vehicle for this change is the student teaching experience. The use of the fundamental skills method by the student teacher inspires and motivates him and the classroom teacher. The impact of this motivation can be extended to the college teachers of foreign languages who do not understand their role in the preparation of the new teacher.

Persistent efforts have been made to bring college professors to an awareness of the qualifications necessary for modern teachers of foreign languages. In 1955 the Modern Language Association formulated "Qualifications for Secondary School Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages," clearly delineating seven areas of language teaching competencies and establishing levels of proficiency. In 1961 the MLA made available "Foreign Language Proficiency Tests for Teachers and Advanced Students." With these tests the proficiency of the advanced student in each of the seven areas can be measured. As a further aid for colleges and universities in their preparation of teachers of modern foreign languages "Guidelines for Teacher Education Programs in Modern Foreign Languages" were recommended in 1965.

One of the features of such programs is student teaching under expert supervision. We picture the ideal of the student teacher, competent in audiolingual skills, gaining experience in using the fundamental skills method under the guidance of a master teacher. This may become the general practice, for experiments are being conducted and suggestions advanced to make more effective use of the practical training period. Many of these programs, however, are on the graduate level. The present undergraduate student teaching situation in foreign languages in the public school system is often far from the ideal. Yet within the scope of the limitations of the diversified programs of undergraduate student teaching there is a stimulus to increase proficiency. Its action is evident in spite of unsatisfactory conditions, such as the following, which are characteristic of this transition period in the teaching of foreign languages.

The student teacher may not have experienced language learning from a retrained teacher. His first introduction to the new approach may have been in his methods class. This course, as recommended in the "Guidelines for Teacher Education Programs in Modern Foreign Languages," is a "study of approaches to, methods of, and techniques to be used in teaching a modern foreign language. There is instruction in the use of the language laboratory and other educational media."[2] In this course the student must become acquainted with modern theories of second language learning, with teaching materials and the tests and measurements of language skills; he must develop an understanding of effective presentation of cultural information. In addition he is expected to develop sufficient mastery in the use of the techniques of the fundamental skills method to be able to keep his class to acceptable levels of progress. The student who has learned the foreign language by the traditional approach does not have the background of experience in teaching a foreign language which facilitates teacher retraining. He may be slow in developing the ability to use the techniques, tools and materials effectively.

Many college teachers of foreign language method courses have only a theoretical acquaintance with the audio-lingual approach and are unable to train the student adequately in the use of the fundamental skills method. All secondary teachers do not yet accept this method as an effective means of teaching languages. Of those who do, all are not yet retrained. Over one-third of the secondary teachers have attended NDEA Institutes; many of these are in need of additional training. As each student qualifies for student teaching, however, he must be placed. Sufficient teachers, expert in the fundamental skills method, as well as total classroom management are not always available.

All secondary school administrators are not convinced of the need for separate classes for pupils entering secondary school with a background of elementary school instruction in foreign languages. The student teacher may be presented with a problem the classroom cooperating teacher has difficulty resolving — a class composed of pupils who are complete beginners

in the target language and those who have had four years of language instruction.

Whatever the limitations of his training or the difficulties of his classroom situation, the student teacher who has been introduced to the fundamental skills method and recognizes the validity of language learning for useful communication is highly motivated. This has profound effects on him and the classroom teacher. The student enters the student-teaching period with a desire to master the techniques of the audio-lingual approach and to foster real progress in the language learning of his pupils. More than is the case with the traditional approach, the use of the FSM leads the student to an early self-realization of his potentialities as a teacher of foreign languages. A student who has evidenced creativity, active leadership and who is competent in language skills may bore himself and the class with endless repetition. His lack of success in directing learning activities leading to meaningful use of the target language leads him to explore fields other than teaching for a career. On the other hand, a student who has doubted his ability to have the class function in the target language may discover, with careful planning and practice, reservoirs of oral competency and marvel at the joys of teaching.

The desire and efforts of the student teacher to employ effectively the FSM stimulate the cooperating teacher to appraise his own performance in the classroom. As a direct result of working with a student teacher, cooperating classroom teachers have requested information about recent literature on developments in language teaching, have enrolled in second-level NDEA Institutes, and have pursued further studies in the target language in the United States and abroad. With the traditional approach the cooperating teacher was less challenged to evaluate his teaching, and, as in a relay race, was primarily concerned that the student, in his weeks of teaching, cover enough material to allow the classs to be carried forward without loss of time.

In order to use the student teaching experience as a moving force in colleges and universities, it is first necessary that the teachers of courses in methods of teaching the target language accept the new emphases in language teaching and be proficient in the use of the new methods and materials. Textbooks, manuals, and other informative materials are accessible. The film series "Principles and Methods of Teaching a Second Language" is readily available and offers valuable training for the methods instructor as well as for the prospective teacher. The facts reveal, nevertheless, that many recent graduates have had no introduction to the new methods. Let us remember that the college professor of foreign language methods courses is also a subject matter teacher. Without personal involvement and extreme dedication of the instructor, a self-study course in methods of teaching ranks low in competition with literary research and study. Now that special NDEA Institutes have been formed for trainers of teachers, the major stimulus for the involvement of the methods teacher has been given. More students will be prepared to use the fundamental skills method in their student teaching. More colleges and universities can use the impact of high motivation for excellence engendered by the student teaching experience as an impetus to all members of the foreign language department to heighten the levels of competency in the language skills of their students. Extension of this impact will result from these steps carried out by the foreign language departments:

1. The foreign language specialist of the public school system is encouraged to keep the college foreign language department aware of the goals of the secondary program.
2. The methods instructor, who should also be the supervisor of the foreign language student teacher, gives regular reports to the college language department on the needs of prospective teachers — the definite skills, the linguistic information and the knowledge and understanding of the foreign culture. He reports to the department on the needs, strengths and weaknesses of the teachers in training. In those institutions where the supervisor of foreign language student teachers is not a member of the foreign language department, observation of the student teacher by the methods instructor is encouraged by the education department.
3. As a forceful supplement to these reports by the methods instructor, at the end of each student teaching period the students meet as a group with the members of the foreign language department. They relate their successes and their failures during their practical experience. They attempt to discover the causes for both in terms of their language training. They evaluate their capabilities and suggest ways to reinforce them so that they might be enabled to function more effectively in the language classroom.
4. The department as a whole determines the common strengths and weaknesses of the students as opposed to those resulting from individual differences. It reviews its program, appraising its course offerings as well as

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Genevieve Blew

Foreign language program development in the United States lost one of its m[illegible] leaders, December 18, ir[illegible] Blew[illegible] Blew[illegible] guag[illegible] Educ[illegible] she l[illegible]

Be[illegible] to [illegible] fore[illegible] was[illegible] the[illegible] mer[illegible]

She was recognized [illegible] organization par excellence which enabled her to spearhead new programs and to implement the creation of new teaching materials and other innovations at a time when such developments were considered revolutionary.

Beginning as a teacher of Latin and French at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, Mrs. Blew became vice-principal and then general supervisor of [illegible] for Montgomery [illegible]ultane-[illegible]ntil re-[illegible]y pro-[illegible]ryland [illegible] of for-[illegible]eorge's [illegible]t Mrs. [illegible]ss, yet she has [illegible] behooves us to rededicate ourselves to the causes she so nobly, brilliantly, and graciously espoused." Such is the inspiration which Mrs. Blew's life has for all who knew her.

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TEACHING (Cont.)

the composition of the courses, and the type of instruction used. Specific areas which can be implemented to eliminate student deficiencies in language skills are pinpointed. Definite suggestions for procedure are offered.

No college professor of foreign languages can be unaware of the revolution in language teaching, nor of the length of this transition period. As a member of an institution with a teacher-preparatory program, he must assume the responsibility to prepare the modern teachers needed by the profession. His involvement with the experiences of student teachers using modern methods can be the instrument for acceleration of the production of well-trained modern teachers of foreign languages.

[1]Eldon Hocking, "The Schools Take Over Foreign Languages," *Journal of Secondary Education*, XXXIX (1964), 243-250.
[2]*Publications of the Modern Language Association*, LXXXI, No. 2 (May, 1966), A-2, A-3.

Election Notice

"Ballots for the second annual election of the NEA Department of Foreign Languages will be sent to all active DFL members as of February 28, 1967, on March 1, 1967. Ballots must be returned by March 31, 1967, in order to be counted.

The slate of candidates for the 1967 election include: Vice-President, Elementary and Senior High School; Regional Directors in Regions 1, 3, 5, and 7. The following DFL members are serving on the Nominations and Elections Committee: Helen E. Shelton, Washington State Office of Public Instruction, Chairman; Anthony Gradisnik, Milwaukee Public Schools; Katherine McCormick, Jerrson County (Colo.) Public Schools; and Ernest J. Mazzone, Massachusetts Department of Education.

Have You Read?

A Blueprint for Greater Foreign Language Teaching Articulation by Lester W. McKim. — 1965. 10¢.

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